

**STATE SENATOR • HANSEN CLARKE • 1ST DISTRICT**

# **Clarke Press Release**

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7346 • Fax: 517-373-5338  
E-mail: [senhclarke@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senhclarke@senate.michigan.gov) • [www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD01](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD01)



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**CONTACT: STATE SEN. HANSEN CLARKE**  
PHONE: 517/373-7346

## **SEN. CLARKE INTRODUCES GRANDPARENT RIGHTS LEGISLATION**

LANSING- Making good on a promise, State Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) introduced legislation today which would outline grandparent visitation rights relating to child custody matters. Senator Clarke pledged last month to introduce new legislation after the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the existing grandparent visitation statute did not meet constitutionality requirements.

“The purpose of this legislation is not to second-guess the parent’s decision but rather to create a mechanism for instances where there is a compelling interest for the courts to intervene,” said Sen. Clarke. “If there is any way to keep loving family members connected, than I feel that is a worthwhile goal.”

The Michigan Supreme Court ruled on August 1st that the current grandparent visitation law did not meet constitutional requirements “as written.” The Court’s decision ruled the law unconstitutional as written because it did not give deference to a fit parent’s decision regarding what is best for the child.

“I feel that in that in most instances, grandparents are positive influences that help to keep loving families together,” said Sen. Clarke. “This bill creates a mechanism to reconnect loving grandparents with their grandchildren in cases where a compelling interest can be established.”

EDITORS NOTE: You can access an audio file of Senator Clarke discussing his grandparent visitation bill at the following web address:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/hansenclarke/press.htm>

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